

Amendment and Response to Office Action

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 and 31 were originally filed in this application. Claims 3, 5 and 26-29 have been withdrawn. In the Office Action of January 25, 2007, claims 1-2, 4, 6-25 and 31 have been rejected. Applicants hereby amend claims 1, 2 and 31, cancel claim 4 and respond and traverse the rejections as follows.

Election/Restriction

Applicants previously traversed the Examiner's election/restriction requirement. The Examiner has made that requirement final and claims 3, 5 and 26-29 have been withdrawn. Because the Office Action is non-final, however, Applicants respectfully submit that cancellation of claims 3, 5 and 26-29 is not yet necessary. *See MPEP § 821.01.*

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 2, 4, 6, 9 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by McCarty et al. (U.S. 5,946,660) (hereafter "McCarty"). In light of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants' invention is generally directed to a system that enables an owner or manager of a self-storage facility to remotely manage the operation of the facility over the Internet. With Applicants' system, an owner or manager can capture and track comprehensive information on various aspects of the facility, including information on revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

McCarty does not teach or suggest a system like that of Applicants' invention at all. In contrast to Applicants' invention, McCarty is directed to an automated self-storage system that obviates the need for an attendant to be on duty at a storage facility for the purpose of transacting business with a potential customer. The purpose of the McCarty system is simply to allow potential customers to conduct business with self storage facilities via a customer kiosk. McCarty does not teach or suggest a system that enables an owner or manager of a self-storage facility to remotely manage the operation of the facility. Nor does McCarty teach or suggest in any way a system having the capability of capturing or tracking information on revenue, cash

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summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information, as does the system of Applicants' invention.

Claim 2 has been amended. It is directed to an automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions. The system includes an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units in one or more self-storage facilities, a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers, and a rental transaction feature in communication with the inventory information capture and customer information capture. One or both of the inventory information capture and customer information capture include information for managing the operation of the self-storage facilities, including information on revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information. The rental transaction feature creates a rental agreement using information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture. The rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units.

McCarty does not teach or suggest all of the features of claim 2. For example, as discussed above, McCarty does not teach or suggest capturing "information for managing the operation of the self-storage facilities, including information on revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information" as recited in claim 2. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that claim 2 is patentable over McCarty.

Claim 4 has been canceled.

Claims 6, 9 and 16 depend from claim 2 and include all of the limitations of claim 2. For at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, Applicants submit that claims 6, 9 and 16 also are patentable over McCarty.

Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 7, 8, 13, 14, 17-22, 24, 25 and 31

Claims 1, 7, 8, 13, 14, 17-22, 24, 25, 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCarty in view of Hafen (US2003/0023453). Applicants respectfully traverse and request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

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Claim 1 has been amended. It is directed to an automated self-storage management system for enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions. The system includes an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units in one or more self-storage facilities, a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers, and a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture. The reporting feature includes means for generating reports for managing the operation of the self-storage facilities, including reports for revenue, unit availability, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

Even if it were proper to combine McCarty and Hafen, Applicants respectfully submit that such a combination does not teach or suggest all of the features of amended claim 1. For example, neither McCarty nor Hafen teaches or suggests a reporting feature including "means for generating reports for managing the operation of the self-storage facilities, including reports for revenue, unit availability, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information" as recited in claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that at least for the reasons discussed above, McCarty and Hafen, taken alone or in combination, do not render claim 1 obvious.

Claims 7, 8, 20-22, 24 and 25 depend from claim 2 and include all of the limitations of claim 2. For at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, Applicants submit that claims 7, 8, 20-22 and 25 also are patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen.

In addition, with respect to claim 7, neither McCarty nor Hafen teaches or suggests capturing "an emergency contact identifier" as recited in Applicants' claim. Although the Examiner asserts that Hafen discloses customer contact information at paragraphs [0098-0099], that information does not appear to include an emergency contact identifier. For this additional reason, Applicants submit that claim 7 is patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen.

Claims 13, 14 and 17-19 depend from claim 1 and include all of the limitations of claim 1. For at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, Applicants submit that claims 13, 14 and 17-19 also are patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen.

In addition, with respect to claim 13, neither McCarty nor Hafen teaches or suggests a report feature includes "an audit report" as recited in Applicants' claim. Although the Examiner asserts that McCarty discloses an audit report at col. 11, lines 33-36, Applicants respectfully

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submit that McCarty does not teach or suggest an audit report in the cited text or elsewhere. For this additional reason, Applicants submit that claim 13 is patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen.

Also, with respect to claim 14, neither McCarty nor Hafen teaches or suggests a report feature that includes “a cash intake report” as recited in Applicants’ claim. Although the Examiner asserts that McCarty discloses reports projecting future rent, nothing in that cited reference addresses whether such rents will be received in cash or by other payment means. For this additional reason, Applicants submit that claim 14 is patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen.

Also, with respect to claim 19, neither McCarty nor Hafen teaches or suggests a report feature that includes “a facility utilization report” as recited in Applicants’ claim. Although the Examiner asserts that McCarty discloses reports for assessing rental trends and unit rental status, it does not provide comprehensive utilization information as does Applicants’ facility utilization report. *See* Applicants’ specification at paragraph [0095]. For this additional reason, Applicants submit that claim 19 is patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen.

Claim 31 has been amended. Claim 31 is directed to an automated self-storage management system enabling a user to conduct self-storage transactions. The system includes an inventory information capture having information pertaining to self-storage units, a customer information capture having information pertaining to customers, a rental transaction feature configured to create a rental agreement using information from the inventory information capture and the customer information capture, and a reporting feature in communication with the inventory information capture and the customer information capture. The rental agreement involves a plurality of self-storage units. The reporting feature includes means for generating reports for managing the operation of the storage facility, including reports for revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information.

Neither McCarty nor Hafen, taken alone or in combination, teaches or suggests all of the features of claim 31. For example, as discussed above, McCarty and Hafen fail to teach or suggest “means for generating reports for managing the operation of the self-storage facilities,

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including reports for revenue, cash summaries, unit availability, facility utilization, reservations, open contracts, rent rolls and credit card information” as recited in claim 31. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore, that claim 31 is patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen.

Claim 10

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCarty. Applicants traverse and request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 10 depends from and includes all of the limitations of claim 2. For the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, Applicants submit that claim 10 also is patentable over McCarty. In addition, McCarty does not teach or suggest “an automatic payment feature applied to [a] first storage unit, and an invoicing feature applied to [a] second storage unit” as recited in claim 10. The Examiner agrees that McCarty does not disclose an invoicing feature applied to a second storage unit. Although the Examiner concludes that such a feature would be obvious, no other reference describing or suggesting such a feature has been cited. Applicants respectfully submit, therefore that the record fails to support a finding of obviousness and that claim is patentable over McCarty.

Claims 11 and 23

Claims 11 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCarty in view of Hafen (as applied to claims 2 and 22) and further in view of the Examiner’s Official Notice. Applicants respectfully traverse and request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 11 and 23 depend from and include all of the limitations of claim 2. For at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 2, Applicants submit that claims 11 and 23 also are patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen and further in view of the Examiner’s Official Notice.

Claim 11 further recites that the automated self-storage management system of claim 2 includes a transfer feature that transfers a customer from an occupied room to a vacant room. The Examiner has taken official notice that it is well known to move a customer from an occupied storage unit to a vacant storage. Applicants respectfully traverse this official notice and request the Examiner to provide documentary evidence supporting the official notice. In any event, Applicants respectfully submit that the mere fact that a customer may have been moved

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from an occupied room to a vacant room does not render obvious the transfer feature of Applicants' invention as described in paragraph [0042] of Applicants' specification.

Claim 12

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCarty in view of Hafen (as applied to claim 11) and further in view of Official Notice and Inomata (U.S. 6,999,825). Applicants traverse and request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 12 depends from claim 11 and includes all of the limitations of claim 11. For at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 11, Applicants submit that claim 12 also is patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen and further in view of the Examiner's Official Notice and Inomata.

Claim 15

Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCarty in view of Hafen (as applied to claim 1) and further in view of Gross (U.S. 6,721,716). Applicants traverse and request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 15 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the limitations of claim 1. For at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1, Applicants submit that claim 15 also is patentable over McCarty in view of Hafen and further in view of Gross.

Conclusion

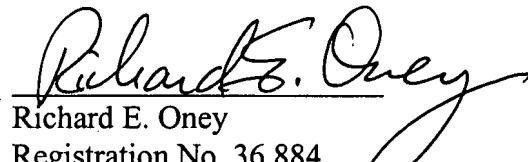
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal

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communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Dated: July 25, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

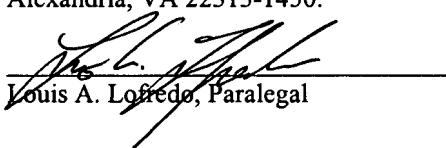


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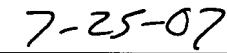
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Louis A. Lofredo, Paralegal



Date of Signature